

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

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USCINCEUR

S E C R E T STATE 115851

EXDIS

MILITARY ADDRESSEES HANDLE AS SPECAT EXCLUSIVE

FOLLOWING MESSAGE SENT SECSTATE WASHDC FROM AMEMBASSY
MANAMA 01 MAY 75:

QUOTE S E C R E T MANAMA 00510

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR, BA

SUBJECT: MIDDLE EAST FORCE NEGOTIATIONS

REF: (A) MANAMA 0486

(B) MANAMA 0137

(C) MANAMA 0107

SUMMARY: FOREIGN MINISTER REASSURES ME GOB TOTALLY SATISFIED
WITH UNDERSTANDING REACHED IN NEGOTIATIONS BUT HESITANT AT
MOMENT TO CONCLUDE NEGOTIATIONS FORMALLY IN VIEW PARLIA-
MENTARY SITUATION. PROBLEM IS PENDING "SENSE OF PARLIAMENT"
RESOLUTION CALLING FOR END OF U.S. NAVY PRESENCE AND POSSIBLE
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MANDATORY LEGISLATION NEXT WINTER TERMINATING AGREEMENT. GOB

DETERMINED TO MAINTAIN NAVY PRESENCE AND SEEKING URGENTLY TO DECIDE WHETHER IT TACTICALLY BETTER TO CONCLUDE NEGOTIATIONS FORMALLY PRIOR TO OR AFTER PARLIAMENTARY DEBATE. I URGED DESIRABILITY CONCLUDING NEGOTIATIONS PRIOR TO DEBATE AND RAISED INEVITABLE LINKAGE BETWEEN PROMPT CONCLUSION NEGOTIATIONS AND SATISFACTORY ARRANGEMENT OF TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM FOR BAHRAIN PRIOR TO JUNE 15 CONGRESSIONAL DEADLINE.

1. FOREIGN MINISTER CALLED ME ON MAY 1 TO EXPLAIN DELAY IN CONCLUDING MIDDLE EAST FORCE NEGOTIATIONS. PROBLEM IS PARLIAMENTARY. GOB CONVINCED IT CAN NO LONGER DELAY DEBATE ON "SENSE OF PARLIAMENT" RESOLUTION CALLING FOR END OF U.S. NAVY PRESENCE UNTIL NEXT FALL'S SESSION. GOB EXPECTS DEBATE TO TAKE PLACE IN NEXT FOUR WEEKS. FOREIGN MINISTER'S ESTIMATE IS THAT, OF 30 VOTING ELECTED DEPUTIES (THE 14 MINISTERS CANNOT VOTE ON SUCH A MOTION), A MAJORITY WILL VOTE AGAINST NAVY PRESENCE WITH VIRTUALLY ALL OF REMAINDER ABSTAINING.

2. FOREIGN MINISTER REITERATED THAT SUCH RESOLUTION HAS NO FORCE OF LAW AND GOB WOULD NOT BE INCLINED TO ACCEPT IT. PROBLEM GOB FACING IS "WORST CASE" SITUATION IN WHICH OPPONENTS NAVAL PRESENCE SOUGHT IN NEXT PARLIAMENTARY SESSION TO PASS BINDING LEGISLATION TERMINATING STATIONING AGREEMENT. GOB FULLY AWARE SUCH A MOVE WOULD PRESENT A CONSTITUTIONAL QUESTION OF ASSEMBLY'S AUTHORITY OVER FOREIGN POLICY AND HENCE SOME ELECTED MEMBERS WHO MIGHT SUPPORT "SENSE OF PARLIAMENT" RESOLUTION WOULD SUPPORT GOVERNMENT IF THIS ISSUE BECAME QUESTION OF BINDING LEGISLATION. MOREOVER, IN THIS "WORST CASE" SITUATION, GOB WOULD PRESUMABLY HAVE ALL 14 VOTES OF THE MINISTERS AT ITS DISPOSAL. FOREIGN MINISTER ADDED THAT GOB MOREOVER CONFIDENT IT COULD DELAY VOTE ON SUCH BINDING LEGISLATION UNTIL AT LEAST JANUARY 1976, SO THAT IN WORST CASE, U.S. NAVY PRESENCE ASSURED UNTIL SUMMER 1976.

3. ACCORDING TO FOREIGN MINISTER, HOWEVER, GOB DETERMINED TO MAINTAIN STATIONING AGREEMENT AND NAVY PRESENCE, HOPEFULLY UNDER BEST POSSIBLE INTERNAL AND ARAB WORLD POLITICAL CONDITIONS. HENCE, GOB AGONIZING OVER BEST TACTICS FOR HANDLING OPPOSITION.

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4. IN THIS SITUATION, CABINET NOW CAREFULLY CONSIDERING TACTICAL IMPLICATIONS OF TIMING OF CONCLUDING NEGOTIATIONS BY FORMAL EXCHANGE OF NOTES AND LETTERS. GOB REALIZES UNDERSTANDINGS REACHED IN NEGOTIATIONS STRENGTHEN ITS HAND WITH OPPONENTS OF NAVY PRESENCE. QUESTION IS WHETHER GOB TACTICALLY BETTER OFF FORMALLY CONCLUDING NEGOTIATIONS PRIOR TO DEBATE ON "SENSE OF PARLIAMENT" RESOLUTION OR WHETHER IT ADVISABLE FOR CABINET TO RECONSIDER FORMAL CONCLUSION OF NEGOTIATIONS AFTER

AND IN LIGHT OF ANTICIPATED PARLIAMENTARY DEBATE. THROUGHOUT THIS DISCUSSION I REPEATEDLY STRESSED TO FOREIGN MINISTER DISTINCTION USG DRAWS BETWEEN NEGOTIATIONS ON CERTAIN ISSUES IN CONTEXT OF STATIONING AGREEMENT AND THE AGREEMENT (AND NAVY PRESENCE) ITSELF. WE FULLY UNDERSTAND CONTINUED NAVY PRESENCE AT ALL TIMES SUBJECT TO GOB'S VIEW ITS VITAL INTERESTS AND HENCE GOB AT ANY TIME IS FREE TO EXERCISE SOVEREIGN RIGHT TO TERMINATE AGREEMENT IF CAREFULLY CONSIDERED POLITICAL FACTORS DICTATE. ON OTHER HAND, USG CONSIDERS THAT NEGOTIATIONS ON ASPECTS OF AGREEMENT ARE CONCLUDED EXCEPT FOR FORMAL EXCHANGE OF PAPERWORK AND WE ARE AT SOME LOSS TO UNDERSTAND GOB'S DELAY IN WRAPPING IT UP. NOTING THAT IN LIGHT OUR OWN EXPERIENCE, USG FULLY UNDERSTANDS DISTINCTION BETWEEN A PARLIAMENT'S EXPRESSION OF OPINION AND ITS ATTEMPT TO LEGISLATE ON A FOREIGN POLICY ISSUE, I URGED FOREIGN MINISTER TO SEEK TO CONVINCE CABINET OF TACTICAL VALUE OF CONCLUDING NEGOTIATIONS PRIOR TO PARLIAMENTARY DEBATE. HE FULLY UNDERSTOOD THOUGH DID NOT NECESSARILY ACCEPT POINT THAT GOB WOULD BE BETTER OFF IGNORING PARLIAMENTARY RESOLUTION AFTER NEGOTIATIONS CONCLUDED THAN CONCLUDING NEGOTIATIONS IN THE FACE OF A HOSTILE PARLIAMENTARY RESOLUTION. I ALSO BORE DOWN HEAVILY ON TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FACTOR, NOTING THAT IN ORDER TO UTILIZE FY 75 FUNDS, WE MUST SUBMIT TO CONGRESS BY JUNE 15 JUSTIFICATION OF TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FUNDING FOR BAHRAIN, THAT SUCH FUNDING FOR "OIL STATE" COULD BE JUSTIFIED ONLY BY ELEMENTS OF A "SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP" BETWEEN U.S. AND BAHRAIN, AND THAT WE WOULD BE HARD PRESSED TO SHOW CONGRESS WHAT WAS SO SPECIAL ABOUT THAT RELATIONSHIP IF GOB HAD FAILED TO FORMALIZE NEGOTIATED UNDERSTANDINGS SATISFACTORILY CONCLUDED IN PRINCIPLE SOME MONTHS PREVIOUSLY. FOREIGN MINISTER ACCEPTED THIS POINT BUT PLEADED THAT WHILE U.S. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE IMPORTANT TO BAHRAIN, AND IN BROAD CONTEXT SUPPORTIVE OF U.S. NAVY PRESENCE, GOB IS DEALING WITH POTENTIALLY EXPLOSIVE DOMESTIC POLITICAL SITUATION.

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TION IN WHICH U.S. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM MIGHT NOT BE OVERRIDING CONSIDERATION.

5. IN CONCLUSION, FOREIGN MINISTER SAID HE WANTED USG TO UNDERSTAND FULLY IN FRANKEST POSSIBLE TERMS CONSIDERATIONS WITH WHICH GOB DEALING. HE EMPHASIZED REPEATEDLY THAT GOB COMPLETELY SATISFIED WITH AGREEMENTS WE HAVE REACHED IN PRINCIPLE, FEELS THAT USG HAS BEEN CONSISTENTLY SYMPATHETIC AND FORTHCOMING IN VIEW OF BAHRAIN'S POLITICAL NEEDS, AND IS MOST APPRECIATIVE OF U.S. ATTITUDE. HE CONCLUDED BY EMPHASIZING CABINET AT THIS STAGE OPEN-MINDED AS TO BEST TIMING FOR CONCLUDING NEGOTIATIONS BUT FELT IN VIEW OF PARLIAMENTARY SITUATION AND ITS POSSIBLE REPERCUSSIONS, IT MUST CONSIDER THIS MATTER MOST CAREFULLY. HE ADDED THAT CABINET WOULD CONTINUE DISCUSSIONS AT MAY 3 SESSION AND HOPED TO REACH SOME

CONCLUSION IN NEXT FEW DAYS.

6. I REASSURED FOREIGN MINISTER USG FULLY UNDERSTANDS GOB'S NEED TO KEEP QUESTION OF AGREEMENT AND NAVY PRESENCE UNDER ONGOING REVIEW AS POLITICAL SITUATION DICTATES BUT THAT IT IS MOST DIFFICULT FOR USG TO UNDERSTAND HESITATION ABOUT FORMALLY CONCLUDING NEGOTIATIONS. FOREIGN MINISTER ASKED THAT I URGE USG TO UNDERSTAND GOB'S PRESENT INDECISIVENESS. I SAID I WOULD TRY TO EXPLAIN THIS TO WASHINGTON EVEN THOUGH I COULD NOT AGREE WITH IT.

7. I HAVE DISCUSSED MEETING AND THIS MESSAGE WITH CMEF. REQUEST DEPARTMENT PASS THIS MESSAGE TO SECDEF, CNO, CINCUS-NAVEUR AND COMIDEASTFOR. TWINAM UNQUOTE KISSINGER

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